

Curator as Collaborator:

A Study of Collective Curatorial Practices in Contemporary Art

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Abstract

This paper is excerpted from a practice-based research conducted between 2017 and 2018, in which I closely explored the collective curatorial practice at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University in Australia. I collaborated with more than twenty students, most of whom are international and graduate art students, to create collective contemporary art projects on RMIT University campus. In this article, I will introduce the student-led RMIT Curatorial Collective and present some examples of student-led contemporary art projects to examine the idea and operation of collective curatorial practice in the university's common art and cultural space. These contemporary art projects articulate collective curatorial practice that interrogates the role of curator in facilitating creative collaborations as a 'collaborator.' I will highlight some of my curatorial experiences in contemporary art production, which provides insight into the collective curatorial process and investigates the characteristics of collective activities in the university's creative environment.

Keywords: *Collective Curatorial Practice, Australian Contemporary Art, Curatorship and Education, University's Creative Environment, Curator as Collaborator*

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Introduction

This research frames the curator as a collaborator for art production and presents alternative models of collective curating in contemporary art. It investigates the relationship between artists and curators in contemporary collective art practices. Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in the number of contemporary curatorial activities throughout the world. As curatorship has been considered as the part of creative practices, the role of the curator has transferred from a behind-the-scene organizer to a significant cultural collaborator. The research investigates how the curator can act as a collaborator in curating so as to inspire creative ideas, exchange cultures and share knowledge with 'the other' (Said 1978). It links curatorial practices with theories and explores the role of curators as a collaborator. The study will investigate the RMIT Curatorial Collective, a student-led organization, at RMIT University and will examine how curators collaborate with artist students and communities from different backgrounds, what the research is designed for, what methods they use and how their collective curatorial practices affect the university's common art and cultural environment.

Collaboration and Collective Curating in Australia

As a common method of art, exhibition or creative project, collaboration involves a group of people, rather than one single person (artist or curator), to develop concepts and work together. In addition to collaboration, other terms are used based on the relationship between participants and the creative methods, including teamwork, cooperation, interaction, collective action, or participation in practice. Because these concepts often overlap with each other, they are referenced by synonymous expressions. Artists and curators can collaborate (curating collectively); furthermore, they can participate in a wide range of active partners outside the field of contemporary art. Artists and curators can also invite viewers to collaborate, which mainly refers to the concept of participation or collective art practice.

In Australia, collective curatorial practices are often found in artist community and Artist Run Initiatives (AIRs).¹ Collaborative and collective curating is an open concept that provides two ways to participate. In the case of collective curatorial practice, based on the idea of collaboration, collaborators can be mutually beneficial. However, through participation, collaborators may only shape the development of their frames of situations that are pre-defined by artists, curators and others. When collective curatorial practice is a mean to implement projects (such as community and art school projects), it is necessary to distinguish between collective curating and the completion of media, such as art projects related to the concept of social art practices,² dialogical aesthetics,³ 'social turn,'⁴ participatory art⁵ and relational aesthetics.⁶

The antecedents of collective curating can be traced back to the 1990s, when the collective thinking of curators, including social participation and biennial,⁷ was first and foremost related to finding alternatives to exchange knowledge and curate production of art. During that time, curators began to work on the genre of the collective author, rather than emphasize the identity of the individual. For instance, in 1993, the Queensland Art Gallery used international advisors and co-

curators to plan the 1st Asia Pacific Triennial,⁸ and in 2000, the Biennale of Sydney is the first time to use the International Selection Committee, including Nick Waterlow (Chair), Fumio Nanjo, Louise Neri, Hetti Perkins, Sir Nicholas Serota, Robert Storr, Harald Szeeman to curate the festival.⁹ Nowadays, some curators (including me and some emerging artists and curators) are interested in collaborative and collective curatorial practices, rather than curate independent projects based on the author-centered modernist tradition, and we develop projects with the active participation of artists and audience. Due to the global network, these collective art projects may transcend geographic boundaries and may even include virtual levels of collaboration and creative arts education that affects universities.

Collective Curatorial Practices in Melbourne

In March 2017, I cofounded the RMIT Curatorial Collective (RCC) with Yun Ci Valerie Sim at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. Valerie is a Singaporean student who studied Master's degree in Arts Management at RMIT University. We have initiated the RCC to promote the concept of collective art and cultural activities, and we believe that collective practice can enhance students' creativity. RCC is a student-led creative group funded and supported by RMIT Creative.¹⁰ The RCC team has a common goal of creating a link between all creative disciplines for all students to form common artistic and cultural space for the university. RCC provides additional opportunities for professional learning, networking and experiences, as well as social interaction and understandings of different cultures. The RCC Student Council consists primarily of international art graduate students with diverse knowledge and cultural backgrounds, particularly in the Asian Pacific region. Through creative activities such as exhibition production, performances, seminars and workshops - these experiences are practical as students can practice for themselves and, in most cases, practice by participating in the entire process. The collective is looking for spontaneous collaboration to execute creative projects among students. This spontaneous collaboration is naturally unaffected by external forces. The motivation of students is mainly from their interests. With the participation of international and local students, they take the initiative to communicate, interact and enhance or exchange skill sets, including curatorial practice, creative creation, critical thinking and art management. RCC acts as an experimental journey, trial and error, or on a campus research site. The creative activities will take place both inside and outside the university and collaborate with different local and international partner institutions.

I am interested in the role of curators. Traditionally, the word 'curate' means 'to take care.' The curator is the manager or keeper of cultural heritage institutions and is taking care of collections. However, after the 1960s, curators began to change their traditional roles. Some art curators - such as Harald Szeemann (Swiss Art Curator) - considered a breakthrough in traditional museological practices. One of his significant curatorial projects was 'The Factory,' where he investigated and reflected curatorial practices.¹¹ Szeemann's curatorial projects mark the shift from taking care of artworks and choosing artworks to the exhibition and then actively involve participants in the development of artistic practice. This shift in the role of the curator can be seen as a response to the changing meaning and

relevance of the artwork. Since then, many contemporary curators have argued that curating is not just about art, but also about artists and art processes. I agree that curators must not only select exiting artworks and present great exhibitions, but also go on with artists to create works for the exhibition. In the process of curating, we should create the idea of 'together with.' In addition to curating the setting of the exhibition, the curator should also participate in the artist's production of art.

The purpose of founding RCC is to investigate the role of the curator with creative participants, participating in collaborative and collective art practices in exhibition production. My role as a curator as a collaborator is different to that of art directors or producers. The idea of collaborator is a term that is frequently used and will be unpacked in relation to RCC projects and the focus of the research on collaboration as collective curating. A broad definition of the topic of collaborative and collective curating has informed some contemporary art curatorial approaches, for example the Asian Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, the Gwangju Biennale (South Korea)¹² and the European nomadic biennial – Manifesta,¹³ but the focus has not been on the actual practice of the curator. Similarly, the focus and emphasis of artists-run initiatives are on collaborative and collective art practices rather than collective curatorial practices, although they acknowledge that curators can be understood as collaborators. However, there is a lack of practical and specific research between collaboration and collective curatorial processes and contemporary art productions. With the increase of collective art productions, the potential of collective curatorial practices and their different forms are now opening up as valuable areas of experimentation. As a curator, I have experience in the production of several collective art exhibitions and recognized that collective curatorial processes are needed and worth researching. I cofounded RCC, which not only focuses on discovering new forms of collaborative and collective curatorial strategies and art production practices, but also provides the forum for discussing the development of collective curatorial contemporary art projects between universities and creative industries.



Figure 1. RMIT Curatorial Collective - The 21st Biennale of Sydney Study Tour.

My Collective Curatorial Approaches

I am a Chinese who was born in Hong Kong, British in 1985. My family story include the Cambodian Civil War and stories of migration of overseas Chinese abroad in Macau, France, Hong Kong, and Australia. I am keen on multicultural identities. The impact of migration and the cross-cultural experience changed my personal identity and art practices. I have been travelling and studying between Australia and Asia for 10 years. I am fascinated by my cultural and artistic position on the imposition of Australian culture on Asian culture and vice versa. On 16th February 2011, the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council launched an Australia's Multicultural Policy titled *The People of Australia*.¹⁴ This policy inspired me to reflect on the cultural impact of multi-ethnic immigrants on Australian arts, culture and society. It seems that the migrants moving among different regions could bring material and cultural wealth to Australia. My experience of Australian multiculturalism has influenced my approach to art practices and inter-cultural cognition. I have witnessed the influences of Australian multicultural society, the effects of geopolitics in Asian Pacific area and the impacts of globalization.

I have been conducting art practices for the last decade. I started as an artist, and then I became a curator, and this was followed by being a creative collaborator. My artistic journey starts from the study of the devising performance with international theater artists. After that, I devoted myself to the learning process of fine art degree, exploring collaborative art practices and curatorial practices. After completing my fine art degree, I studied a master's degree of art curating. I started to explore my role as a curator-collaborator. I am interested in the relationship between artists and curators. The unclear power balance in the collaboration between curator and artist has not been explored and discussed thoroughly in my previous studies. To me, curating can be considered as a social practice. I want to curate an exhibition by groups rather than by individuals. As a curator-collaborator, curating raises a lot of questions and interests in my exhibition makings. In my curatorial practice, I propose that curators not only select exiting artworks and present great exhibitions, but also go on with artists to create works for the exhibition. An international curator, Han-Ulrich Obrist, suggested a curator not just fills in the space with objects, but is a person who 'brings different cultural spheres into contact.' My research focuses on studying how I worked with artists and curators from different backgrounds, what curatorial project is designed for, what methods are used and how devising practices influence collective art curating.

In my curatorial work, curating methods are critical for me to create a collective creative environment. In the production of the exhibition, I realized my expertise is to find opportunities for exhibition collaboration and provide curatorial strategies instead of creating various art forms. There are similarities between my collaborative curatorial practice and my exhibition production. My participation mediates the collective creative environment and how people curate art exhibitions. My curatorial practice is influenced by the devising theater. Devising theater - often referred to as collective creation (Syssoyeva, 2013) - is a method of dramatic production in which scripts or performance come from a collaborative ensemble of collaborations - usually improvised works. I adopted the approach of devising

theater and then I transform the devising method into the exhibition making. I suggest that devising practice is an evolution in which the whole creative team develops an exhibition together and from artists to curators, everyone is involved in the curatorial progress. Devising practice is also an exciting and nervous way of working. I like the challenge of curating an exhibition from scratch, and this freedom brings a significant attraction: there is no curatorial statement; no safety net.

Moreover, an English theater director Peter Brook offers a useful theory approach to my exhibition projects. My curatorial methods employed Brook's approach of 'exercises', improvisation and 'work in process' as a way of framing, constructing and developing techniques of collective curatorial practice in contemporary art. This has been done through an on-going series of group exercises where ideas have been picked up and explored through discussion, art making and installation.

Collective Arts Projects at RMIT University

One of the first RCC projects *The Curatorial Age: The Future Curating* was held at the RMIT First Site Gallery¹⁵ from 31 July - 2 August 2018. This collective project adopted the model called the collective creation in contemporary performance. I used the application of improvisation, exercises and works in progress, which provides critical discourse and practices to investigate the development of collective curatorial practices in contemporary art projects.

The Curatorial Age: The Future Curating included an exhibition and a round table discussion. The collective project explored the idea of 'The Curatorial Age,' defined by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (an Italian-American writer, art historian and curator) as 'a time when no one could speak about art without acknowledging the curatorial presence.' (Smith, 2015:40) I initiated this project with nine curators, and then we invited eleven artists to participate in the collective exhibition (most of curators and artists studied Master of Arts Management, Master of Fine Art, Master of Arts (Art in Public Space) and Bachelor of Arts (Fine Art) at the RMIT School of Arts).¹⁶ We turned the exhibition space into a laboratory, and we explored the collaborative and collective art practices and discussed the issues of contemporary art production. We have raised different questions, for instance, as a project that emphasizes collaboration and collective curatorial practice - what was unique or different in this approach? How was it different from other exhibitions you have participated in - as a curator or creative participant? Is the role of the 'collaborator' different from the role of the curator? Does the collaborative and collective curatorial approach produce different types of outcomes and art projects? Can we identify standards for collaboration and collective curatorial methods or forms? How do collaboration and collective curatorial change the curatorial approach? The collaborators aimed to bring together students, staffs, and industry professionals to unpack, examine and discuss the role of the curator today.

The progress of this collective project included is: Find creative partners --> Discuss creative idea --> Record curatorial dialogue --> Curate creative project --> Prepare the material --> Create the work --> Write the curatorial statement --> Install the work in the gallery --> Present to the public --> Participate and interact in events.

These unique methods were a powerful guideline for students to work collectively in the exhibition space. Considering the collective curating, the guideline of creating a mode of works – ‘based on students’ creative development’ and ‘collaboration first’ is put forward. Students were encouraged to create a creative curatorial discourse that visually emphasizes research impact using hybrid artistic practices such as found object, photo image, creative writing, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation and performance. The exhibition provided an opportunity for students and professionals to exchange creative ideas and it intersected and supported collective curatorial practices in university’s creative and cultural space to promote understandings and work development in contemporary art activities.



Figure 2. The opening of *The Curatorial Age: The Future Curating* at the RMIT First Site Gallery.

The second collective project presented by RCC is *Artland 2018*, which is an annual exhibition of site-specific art installations on and around the RMIT Brunswick campus from October 2 to 24, 2018. The project aimed to explore how curators and artists can work together in a collective way in the development and installation of a group site-specific exhibition. It focused on curatorial practice with a view of developing a collective curatorial strategy and framework. I co-curated this project with Australian curator Jessica Clark and artist Liss Fenwick, with nine multidisciplinary artists and students.¹⁷ We transformed the university campus into an exploratory playground for contemporary art and produced eleven site-specific installations and a performance at the opening ceremony and participated in an art tour. Art installations included painting, photography, sound art, sculpture, video art, performing arts and found objects. During the installation setting and art tour, collaborators explored the techniques of improvisation, games and exercises used in collective art curating. The purpose of using these techniques in the creative process is to help artists and curators engage in the dialogue between ideas and practices, as well as to investigate creative process and relationships presented during the installation process. We tested the approach of exploratory playground of contemporary art in the university space. We examined how curators and artists work collaboratively and collectively – as a form of collective curating – in the creation, development and installation of contemporary art exhibitions.

The discourse is my primary method of curating. I employ this method as a consultation tool, or a way of learning. It is a primary source of original ideas and promotes various kinds of thinking. It is essentially neutral at the beginning, and it involves interaction, communication, re-understandings and analyses; the dialogues can and do change. I consider discourse and curating are closely related, and they are all connected to a larger, more comprehensive network of knowledge and ideas. I am a person who likes to ask questions.

How to conduct the discourse is important to me and is what I emphasize in my curatorial practice. The way of discourse comes from communication; it is important to conduct discussions and critical thinking in the dialogue. In *Artland 2018*, artists and I started the first conversation by discussing working collectively in the exhibition. I subsequently suggest conduct collective discussion and require the artists to share their art practices and interests, by coming up with the contemporary issues that we are particularly concerned and cared. In the process, we begin to open our dialogue and start to build up our curatorial discourse. We believe that the collective discussion is the primary source of our exhibition statement and provides a platform for creative collaboration.

Communication (listening and responding) is not just about talking. Good communication is the genes of collective curatorial practices, which is the outcome of artists and I spending hours collectively working at RMIT Brunswick campus. It forms a collective discussion or dialogues of a curating. The project started as personal dialogues between artists and me as well as expanded and developed into a series of collaborative site-specific art projects.

I applied the 'Give and Take' exercise in our communication; the discourse gains meanings and becomes important. The 'Give and Take' practice comes from the theatrical game. The exercise invites performers to explore a series of repetitive sounds and movements and considers how they are connected as part of the energy giving and absorption between performers on the stage. I consider this as a part of my curatorial practice. I gradually realize that focusing on dialogue, active listening and responding do help to achieve good and effective communication. By understanding and sharing our views and positions, the dialogue can shift from a personal statement to a common topic. This is when a curatorial discourse begins. There is potentially an infinite set of possibilities in the communication.

A meaningful collaboration needs to be discovered together in addition to communication. I referred to the methods of learning in the devised theater, and I found that the skill of 'improvisation' could be applied to the communication and expressions of many different abilities or forms of art and can help develop the presentation of collaboration. There is space between collaborators to communicate, explore and collaborate through the creation process. These processes give me opportunities to open new, unexpected, and potentially useful ideas. They made me 'thinking outside the square.'

I become interested in using 'games' in collective curating through the course of the theater directors. The use of games and exercises is parallel to my long-term

interest in collective curating; the process of slow development allows artists and curators to know what they can do together and let me see relationships with others. In the Artland 2018, I used group activities as the basis for the initiative to integrate artists and my own creations into the exhibition space through collective curation. I collaborated with artists to plan a series of repetitive (with improvisation) games. I encouraged every artist to experiment repeatedly in the process of hanging the work in order to discuss collaboration together.

The repetitive exercise is a technique that encourages artists and curators to experiment on their thoughts. The results of the exercise exceeded my imagination; without practices, I cannot speculate the outcome, even though I have been working with artists. The ability to exercise and work together is a necessary condition for effective collaboration. The process of exercise is a tension that causes artists and curators to explore the right things at the right time and space. Similarly, improvisation gives me a sense of uncertainty that allows me to be aware other things, such as an ensemble, or the differences between the collaborators.

I am conscious that there are two actions in the process of the repetitive exercise: giving and taking. They appear in communication or interaction and convey ideas to each other, which means exchanging and sharing energy. This dual action process is clearly reflected in the curatorial practice of the site-specific art project. Artists were initially asked to select a space or location on the RMIT Brunswick campus. After many field trips and discussions, our team decided the exhibition locations. Through the installation process – when games and exercises take place – creating improvisations in any art forms can be used more in practices to encourage creative behavior. Then artists began to actively collaborate and because part of our curatorial process; everyone had some ideas and encouraged everyone to express each other. (For example, I observed that the dialogues between artists in setting up their works was very meaningful; after their discussion and exploration together, the works were changed the way of presentation.) I am interested in establishing these opportunities for giving and taking, as well as for others to discover ways of collaboration. This provides a model for my own work and my curatorial practice – a model requires me to create a playground (collective environment) and then allows me to play games with others. Our energy is exchanged and transformed.

I questioned the energy conversion in an exhibition curating. How do I curate an exhibition at the present? I consider that all exhibitions are ‘works-in-progress.’ Works-in-progress helps to make works ‘alive.’ It also seems to allow artists and curators to creatively create exhibition making requires power for both individuals and groups. It allows us to transform different art forms of artistic creation. For example, combining visual arts and performance arts. Energy is generated by power. Works-in-process can create this power. I find it interesting that the presentation is an exhibition of works-in-progress, including improvisations, games and exercises, and work-in-progress makes the curatorial progress part of the exhibition. This organic or uncertain process creates an experimental area that I operate within.

The game is about the progress, not the result. I am interested in games and playgrounds, which begin with the curiosity of the organic nature of the curating exhibition. Marcel Duchamp stated that 'art is a game between all people of all periods.' I consider that art curating is a game that allows people to create different artistic activities and play together. I agree with Duchamp's point of view, and I think my curating approach should also provide opportunities and platforms for creative practitioners to explore and experiment with their creative creations. I apply this as a structure for exploring the exhibition making for artists. I want to ensure that we avoid using conventional curating methods in the exhibition space, so I suggest that artists imagine the exhibition site as a playground where they could play with arts. Artists could spend time at the site to create their works. Interestingly, when artists were creating works, walkers on the road stopped to watch their creations and talked to them. The artists' works-in-progress of creation became an exhibition, which presented an addition set of performance. In the installation progress, I was a collaborator; on one hand, I balanced the relationship between people, space, time. On the other hand, I worked on the sites to plan a playground for artists and curators to create and play together. I was amazed that when the exhibition area gradually became a playground, it provided us with an exciting, fascinating and challenging space. The concept of playground made our collaboration more energetic and enabled artists and curators to continue to develop their learning and adaptability. I deem curatorship as a game played together - by work-in-progress with the time and the space to enjoy the creation of art.

I have always been intrigued by Obrist's *Do It* touring exhibition,¹⁸ which focuses on how exhibition formats could be rendered more flexibly and be more open-ended – a concept of the 'Exhibition in Progress.' Obrist's exhibitions often show what he calls a 'quality of unfinishedness and incompleteness.' Like Obrist, I do not like art exhibitions having temporal, spatial or intellectual restrictions. The conventional galleries and formats annoy me; closing the date haunts me. I prefer to see the exhibition as a seed that can be planted.

Curating and exhibition making can be seen as collaborative art practices. We used RMIT Brunswick campus as a site of innovation and hosted intensive sessions for collaborating art participants to curate, installation, exhibit and performances. On the RMIT Connect and Student Life website page, it is stated:

'With touches of humor and the absurd, the artists collectively respond to the theme of 'movement and change', the idea of our digital future in the context of RMIT's Brunswick campus – melding fact and fiction, and engaging in a performative play with the natural and built environment to explore thresholds and the in-between.'¹⁹

We got together to discuss what we were about to create since the project became an opportunity for us to create artistic creations collectively. We produced nine site-specific installations and a performance as well as participated in an art tour in the opening ceremony. During the art tour and installation, artists and curators

explored the techniques of improvisation, games and exercises used in art curation. We tested the approach of exploratory playground of contemporary art on the campus.

By working together in the collective environment, we could understand each artistic practice. Fortunately, this is not the first collaborative exhibition that many of artists and curators have done, and most of us have some experiences in collaborative art practice (especially the combination of visual arts and performance arts). I realized that we could combine our ideas and works to create a collective environment that brought together our individual and collaborative artistic practices. We opted against the collective curatorial approach. Was it because we were idealistic or radical, or did we think this was the progressive process that combines personal and collective interests?

In the progress of collaboration, projects were created with and for artists, curators and audience to develop experimental laboratory approaches to framing and interacting with creative collaborators. The laboratory became a collective environment that provided participants with the possibility to experiment together. In the progress of creative work, the roles of artists, curators and audience gradually blurred and overlap, and they became collaborators unconsciously. Through artistic practices, collaborators exchanged skills and shared experience. The implementation and conduct of collective art cooperation - collective environment, collective action and collective knowledge - provide another way to link contemporary art production to the university's creative setting.



Figure 3. The art tour of *Artland* 2018 on RMIT Brunswick campus.

These two collective art projects are acts of creative collaborators' collaboration where collaborators seek progress, changes and answers on broader topics of collective curation. Collaborators are not only generated new methods, but also reflect on relationships, authorship and final situations as creative outcomes. These projects are not only search collective curation, but investigate collaborators' collective thinking, creating and working.

By rethinking the values of collective and individuals, these collective curatorial experiments showed the curating progress itself as an exhibition or a result. The curatorial experiments (e.g. curatorial discourse, games and exercises, improvisation, work/exhibition in progress) are transformed into a new environment and situation, and then these experiments are developed as a set of 'anti-curating' exhibition/s produced collectively. These exhibitions explore the potential, targets and uncertainties of the collaborators and me. We study collective curatorial practices as an alternative format for the individualist curating as imperatives of interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-cultural environments.

The New Direction of University Collective Curating

The idea of collective curatorial projects is an open approach. The devising practice can help students train and develop their skills in art both professionally and academically. Students can develop and exchange their knowledge and techniques in interdisciplinary collaboration through practice-based learning and using art production as an educational tool. Curating the 'collective environment' at the university, students and creative collaborators can work together as partners and authors in curatorial and creative practices. Collective art projects offer students and professionals more opportunities to collaborate on research between the university-community and industry. For example, collaborators can work in different schools and departments of the university as well as in private and government sectors. In the case of collaboration between different partners, the curatorial vision and method are also formed by a variety of voices, so joint planning, and sharing decisions and responsibilities are more prominent in the realization of the project. One concept we can see is that nowadays an increasing number of Australian universities and institutions are strengthening interdisciplinary research to strengthen and motivate the entire field of research, as well as other disciplines or single disciplines in existing and developing areas of the university. The universities work collaboratively with industry, not-for-profit organizations, and local and overseas governments to challenge contemporary issues and provide new solutions that transform our world.

Conclusion

After a year of collective art curatorial research, I realized that collective curatorial approach can be both motivating and creative in teaching, learning, and research, but to some extent it is limited by participants, space and time. In other words, collective curatorial practice requires more time and resources than traditional curation. However, the process of collective curatorial practice may be more experimental and meaningful than traditional curation. I have investigated three important factors in conducting a collective curatorial project at university. First, we need to focus on the balance of creativity between creative partners. As students or participants come from different educational and cultural backgrounds, in the collective curatorial project, we need to balance energy and tension in the process of collaboration and provide comfortable space for people with different needs. Second, as a curator-collaborator who focuses on collective curatorial practice, I should create collective environment for creative collaborators to work together. I also need to fully understand the demand and supply of collabora-

tors as well as master existing resources such as human resources, funding and exhibition space. On one hand, we can help partners achieve their goals in collective projects. On the other hand, we can use the talents of our collaborators to help each other. I always remember Obrist said ‘I really do think artists are the most important people on the planet, and if what I do is a utility and helps them, then that makes me happy. I want to be helpful’ (Robert, 2009). The curator should be the first person to take care of artists. Knowing what the team has and what the team needs are the most important job for curators to work in collective art projects. Third, I found that the collective project consume more time to plan, develop and improvise the curatorial approaches and methods. We must have enough time for collaborators to work together and provide guidance for them to collaborate. As far as I am concerned, not all artists, curators, students and participants have experience in collaboration and collective practice. Therefore, when starting a collective art project in the university space, we need to make sure the timeline and schedule for collaborators. According to my experience, most collective art projects are works-in-progress. Collective art projects seem to collaborate in researching and innovating new knowledge, not just making gorgeous artworks.

Understanding the nature of collective curatorial practice in art production is to elaborate on what collaboration is and how collaboration can be applied as a set of strategies for creative projects. This study is an example of providing collective art curating as an alternative way of creative arts education. It opens up the possibilities of practice-based research for students and professionals in the university’s common art and cultural space.

Endnotes

- 1 Artist Run Initiatives (ARIs) are developed, organized and operated primarily by artists. Please see the <https://visualarts.net.au/space/artist-run-initiatives-aris/> website for more information.
- 2 Socially engaged practice describes art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work. Please see the <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/socially-engaged-practice> website for more information.
- 3 Kester. G. said, ‘One way to answer this question, and a useful entry into the conversation, is to think about the concept of aesthetic autonomy and the way that it functions within modernism and in earlier avant-garde movements.’ Please see the http://martinkrenn.net/the_political_sphere_in_art_practices/?page_id=1878 website for more information.
- 4 Social turn was first used in 2006 to describe the recent return to socially engaged art that is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium or material of the work. Please see the <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/social-turn> website for more information.
- 5 Participatory art is a term that describes a form of art that directly engages the audience in the creative process so that they become participants in the event. Please see the <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/participatory-art> website for more information.

- 6 Term created by curator Nicholas Bourriaud in the 1990s to describe the tendency to make art based on, or inspired by, human relations and their social context. Please see the <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/relational-aesthetics> website for more information.
- 7 A biennial is a large international art exhibition held every two years. Please see the <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/biennial> website for more information.
- 8 The 1st Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art' (APT1) was the first project of its kind in the world to focus on the contemporary art of Asia and the Pacific. Please see the <https://www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/the-1st-asia-pacific-triennial-of-contemporary-art-apt1> website for more information.
- 9 The Biennale of Sydney 2000 broke from the tradition of a single artistic director. Please see the <https://www.biennaleofsydney.art/archive/12th-biennale-of-sydney/> website for more information.
- 10 RMIT Creative offers a diverse program across dance, performing arts, music, visual arts + design. Our events, activities and student-run collectives are open to you, no matter what you study. Please see the <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/life-and-work-opportunities/arts-and-culture> website for more information.
- 11 Szeemann worked in a studio, called 'The Factory', in the village of Tegna, Switzerland where he conceived international exhibitions and experimented with traditional museum practices.
- 12 Founded in 1995 in memory of spirits of civil uprising of the 1980, the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea is Asia's oldest biennial of contemporary art. Please see the <https://www.gwangjubiennale.org/en/index.do> website for more information.
- 13 Manifesta is a nomadic biennial of contemporary art & culture that changes location every 2 years. Please see the <https://manifesta.org/biennials/about-the-biennials/> website for more information.
- 14 Multiculturalism. Please see the <https://archive.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/life/multicultural/australias-multicultural-policy-history> website for more information.
- 15 First Site Gallery is RMIT's student gallery and presents exhibitions by students from all study areas. Please see the <https://www.rmit.edu.au/students/life-and-work-opportunities/arts-and-culture/visual-art-opportunities> website for more information.
- 16 Collaborators and students included Lauren Tan, Renee Bibby, Valerie Sim, Martina Clarke, Nattha Sangboon, Raneen Wardy, I-Rin Hariraksaowani, ZhouYi Liang, Julian Cobb, Lara Chamas, Livia Gobbo Deboni, China Paul, Lauren McNeill, Te Anihana Anderson, Adelaide Gandrille, Nathan Collis, Rosina Yuen, Mara Braun, Gillian Quirk, Simon Crosbie, Allen de Carteret and Wilson Yeung.
- 17 Artists and students included Simon Crosbie, Allen de Carteret, Martina Clarke, Declan Mulcahy, Felix Wilson, Jade Richards-Butler, Kieran Boland, Rebecca Delange and Sarah Walker.
- 18 Please see the <https://doingit.fba.up.pt/en/about/do-it/> website for more information.

19 Please see the <http://www1.rmit.edu.au/students/life-and-work-opportunities/arts-and-culture/visual-art-opportunities/artland> website for more information.

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